

## ECA Child Abuse Policy

Child abuse and neglect is a growing concern in schools throughout the world. Child abuse and neglect is a violation of children's human rights and an obstacle to their education and development. Schools hold a particular institutional role in society to protect children and to insure all children are afforded a safe and secure environment in which to grow and develop. Schools and educators, having the opportunity to observe and interact with children over a long period of time, are in a unique position to identify children who need help and protection. As such, schools and educators have a professional and ethical obligation to identify children who are in need of help and protection and to take steps to ensure that the child and family avail of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect. In addition to protecting children from abuse and neglect, schools must also protect them from suspected or identified abusers and sex offenders.

All staff employed at ECA must report suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect whenever the staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect. Staff members must also report suspected or identified child abusers and sex offenders. Reporting and follow through of all suspected incidences shall proceed in accordance with administrative regulations respective to this policy. Furthermore, the Superintendent, after consulting with the Board President, may determine to report cases of suspected child abuse/abusers and neglect to appropriate employment sponsor, to the respective embassy, to the appropriate child protection agency in the home country, and/or local authorities, if that is determined to be the appropriate course of action. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (and/or regional equivalents) informs the approach ECA uses in working/being in contact with children.

### Child Abuse and Neglect Definitions

1. ECA defines a child to be anyone under 18 years of age as defined by the UNCRC.
2. Physical Abuse: The inflicting, or allowing the infliction, of intentional, non-accidental physical injury to a child by a parent or person responsible for the care of the child.
3. Physical Neglect: The withholding, by a parent or person responsible for the care of the child, of those things necessary for his/her health and normal development, including adequate food, clothing, shelter, sleep, supervision, medical treatment and education.
4. Sexual Abuse: The involvement of a child in any sexual act or situation. All sexual activity between a child and parent or person responsible for the care of the child is considered sexual abuse.
5. Emotional Abuse: An act of commission or omission, by the parent or person responsible for the care of the child that significantly impairs the emotional well-being of a child. This includes: humiliation; threats to injure or withdraw physical or emotional support; isolation from social contacts; or withholding things necessary for mental health such as respect, security, limits, attention, affection and love.

6. Psychological Neglect: The young person is isolated, ignored; nurturing is withheld; little or no time or attention for the young person from the adults responsible.

#### Procedures

The schools' orientation procedures include guidelines as to what adults working in school should do in the event that they become aware of child protection concerns. Staff will be informed of changes to policy and procedures and updated in good child protection practice through staff meetings and the faculty handbook. As a part of this policy, all adults who come on campus will be required to sign the ECA Code of Conduct and participate in a child safety presentation.

#### Guidelines:

1. Where staff observe signs, which give cause for concern they must make this known to the Division Principal without delay. This must be carried out with tact, confidentiality and sympathy. Over questioning should be avoided. Notes must be taken, including date and time of any conversations held with the child as soon as possible.
2. Both the Principal and the person raising the concern must log details of the concern in writing. This must then be communicated to the Superintendent as soon as possible.
3. Other staff should be informed of concerns on a need to know basis only and any suspicions or additional information added to the concern notes.
4. Following initial discussions it may be decided that other reasons are responsible for the concern and the possibility of child abuse can be ruled out. If this is so, then the matter can be dropped, but notes will be held in a secure area.
5. Following initial discussions with the Superintendent, it may be decided to monitor the situation. In this case, the class teacher (s) is (are) responsible for keeping confidential notes in a secure area recording daily observations. All notes must be dated and times noted where appropriate.
6. If a child talks openly and makes direct references to being abused, a referral should be made to the appropriate Division Principal immediately.
7. All decisions regarding the reporting of a case of abuse outside of the school, including to parents, will be made by the Superintendent.

ECA will make child protection a part of every aspect of the school. As such, ECA will distribute this policy annually to all stakeholders through Faculty and Division Handbooks, Parent Handbooks, and the ECA web site. In the case of a staff member or community member is reported as an alleged offender, ECA will conduct a full investigation following a carefully designed course of due process.

*Approved by the ECA Board of Directors: 29 October 2013*

*Updated: June 2015*

*Endorsed by the Superintendent:* 